

REMARKS

This Reply to Office Action is responsive to the Office Action mailed June 6, 2005. Claims 1-30 are pending in the present application.

Claims 5 and 20 have been objected to for excluding the word "wherein." As such, claims 5 and 20 have been amended to include the word "wherein," as suggested by the Examiner.

Claims 8-10, 13, 15, 23-25, 28 and 30 have been objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant's undersigned attorney appreciates the Examiner's indication that Claims 8-10, 13, 15, 23-25, 28 and 30 are allowable.

Claims 1-7, 11, 12, 14, 16-22, 26, 27 and 29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,355,880 issued to Bateson (the Bateson patent) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,486,650 issued to Yetter (the Yetter patent).

The Bateson patent discloses an outlet cover assembly for a raceway. As shown in figure 1, the outlet cover assembly is installed in a three channel raceway. The outlet cover assembly 12 includes a modular base 50, a cover 52 and a faceplate 152. The base 50 includes a bottom wall 54 with three access openings 112 that have a removable knock-out plate 110 designed to provide access to each channel of the raceway. The base 50 also includes sidewalls 58 that are preferably integrally formed with the bottom wall 54 and coupling members 70 that secure the base to the raceway. The base is designed to receive one receptacle or wiring device 56. After the base is secured to the raceway, a receptacle is installed in the base and the cover 52 is positioned over the base and

receptacle positioned therein. The cover 52 includes an opening 140 with a recessed ledge 142 for receiving a faceplate 152. As set forth in column 6, lines 42-44, the faceplate has dimensions corresponding to the recessed ledge 142 of the opening 140.

As set forth in column 4, lines 28-30 of the Bateson patent, the base is designed to be used alone or in combination with multiple bases in a ganged fashion. Thus, as illustrated in figures 6 and 7, if it is desirable to place two or more adjacent receptacles or outlets in the raceway, two or more bases are positioned adjacent each other in the raceway. An outlet cover designed to accommodate more than one outlet would be positioned over the adjacent bases.

With respect to independent claims 1 and 16, the Bateson patent fails to teach or disclose a hanging box compartment with a removable divider wall for dividing the compartment to house two receptacles and a faceplate adapter having a removable section being position within the aperture such that removal of the removable section expands the aperture.

The Yetter patent illustrates a device box mounted to a raceway or a conduit. The device box includes a base 14, mounting posts 28 and a partition 12 that divides the box in half so that the box may receive two receptacles. The partition 12 includes a dividing member 17 and a pair of retaining members 18a and 18b that cooperate with the mounting posts 28 to removably retain the partition 12.

Although the Yetter patent illustrates a device box with a removable partition, there would have been no motivation to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the invention disclosed by the Bateson patent with that of the Yetter patent. If the sidewall 58 in the Bateson patent was considered a "divider wall," it could not

be removed from the base because the sidewall maintains the outlet or receptacle within the base.

Even if the sidewall could be removed, it would not have been desirable or necessary to provide a removable divider wall within the base of the outlet cover assembly of the Bateson patent to divide the base into two compartments to receive two receptacles in the raceway. As illustrated in figures 6 and 7 of the Bateson patent, if it is desirable to include two adjacent receptacles in the raceway, two adjacent bases would be provided in a ganged fashion and an outlet cover designed to accommodate more than one outlet would be positioned over the adjacent bases.

Additionally, each base 50 includes access openings 112 covered by individual knock-out plates 110 that may be removed to provide access to any of the channels in the raceway. Thus, a divider wall would not be necessary to accommodate various wiring configurations from a specific channel in the raceway to the receptacle in the base.

As discussed above, the Bateson patent includes an outlet cover 52 with an opening 140 that receives a removable faceplate 152. Although removal of the faceplate 152 provides access to the opening 140, the actual dimension of the opening 140 does not change. The opening 140 is not “expanded” when the removable section is removed as set forth in independent claims 1 and 16 of the present invention. The Yetter patent also fails to disclose “a faceplate adapter having a removable section being position within the aperture such that removal of the removable section expands the aperture.”

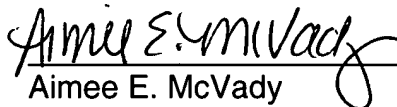
Thus, the Bateson patent and the Yetter patent, either alone or in combination, fail to teach or disclose the present invention as set forth in independent claims 1 and 16. As such, the Bateson patent and the Yetter patent, either alone or in combination, also fail to

teach or disclose the present invention as set forth in dependent claims 2-15 and dependent claims 17-30. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-30 are allowable over the Bateson patent and the Yetter patent, either alone or combined.

In view of the above, Applicant submits that claims 1-30 are allowable and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: November 1, 2005

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Aimee E. McVady", written over a horizontal line.

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